

A NOTE ON NUTRITION**CHOWDHURY
TASNEEM HASIN**

Chief Dietician, United Hospital Ltd.
Associate General Secretary
Bangladesh Nutrition and Dietetics Forum
tasneemhasin@gmail.com



Our eyes are complex organs that need many different vitamins and nutrients to function properly. Common conditions such as diabetic retinopathy, age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma and cataracts can impact our eyes, and malnutrition seems to have an influence on all of them.

Adding powerful vitamins, antioxidants and minerals to the diet can improve vision and overall eye health. Researchers have linked eye-friendly nutrients, such as lutein and zeaxanthin, vitamin C, vitamin E, copper and zinc to reducing the risk of certain serious eye diseases.

Diabetes is a leading cause of blindness. People with diabetes should carefully monitor blood sugar levels, take medications exactly as prescribed by their doctor, and manage carbohydrate intake while focusing on eating low-moderate glycaemic index (GI) foods. The current daily recommendations for healthy eye nutrients are:

500 milligrams (mg) of vitamin C
400 international units of vitamin E
10 mg lutein
2 mg zeaxanthin
80 mg of zinc oxide
Lutein and Zeaxanthin

Lutein and zeaxanthin are part of the carotenoid family, a group of beneficial compounds synthesized by plants. Several studies suggest that these plant compounds may prevent cataracts and prevent or slow the progression of age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

Dark green leafy vegetables are the primary source of lutein and zeaxanthin, as well as other colourful fruits and vegetables like broccoli, corn, peas, etc.

Vitamin C

This lowers the risk of developing cataracts

Nutrition for healthy eyes



and when taken in combination with other essential nutrients, it can slow the progression of age-related macular degeneration and visual acuity loss.

Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant that may protect eyes against damaging free radicals. In addition, required to make collagen, a protein that provides structure to your eye, particularly in the cornea and sclera. For the daily dose, try incorporating oranges, grapefruit, papaya, green pepper and tomatoes into your diet.

Vitamin E

Many eye conditions are believed to be associated with oxidative stress, which is an imbalance between antioxidants and free radicals which break down healthy

tissue. Vitamin E is a potent antioxidant. Some vitamin E rich options include nuts, seeds and cooking oils. Salmon, avocado and leafy green vegetables, vegetable oils (including safflower and corn oil), nuts, wheat germ and sweet potatoes, etc.

Essential fatty acid

Omega-3 fatty acids are a type of polyunsaturated fat. The cell membranes of your retina contain a high concentration of DHA, a particular type of omega-3.

Omega-3 fats may also benefit individuals with dry eye disease by helping them produce more tear. Studies in pre-term and full-term infants suggest that getting enough omega-3 fatty acids in the diet is essential for optimal visual development. And can help reduce inflammation and support the eye's oily outer layer and may help prevent diabetic retinopathy (DR) when included in diet.

To increase omega-3 fatty acids in your diet, include rich sources such as fish, flaxseed, chia seeds, soy and nuts. Omega-3s can also be found in cooking oils such as canola and olive oil.

Zinc

Zinc plays a vital role in bringing vitamin A from the liver to the retina in order to produce melanin, a protective pigment in the eyes. Impaired vision, such as poor night vision and cloudy cataracts, has been linked to zinc deficiency. For natural dietary sources of zinc, try red meat, shellfish, and nuts and seeds.

Vitamin A

Vitamin A plays a crucial role in vision by maintaining a clear cornea, which is the outside covering of your eye. This vitamin is also a component of rhodopsin, a protein in eyes that allows to see in low light conditions called xerophthalmia

which begins with night blindness. If vitamin A deficiency continues, tear ducts and eyes can dry out. Eventually, cornea softens resulting in irreversible blindness. Some studies suggest that diets high in vitamin A may be associated with a reduced risk of cataracts and age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Sweet potatoes are an excellent source, as are leafy green vegetables, pumpkins and bell peppers.

Thiamine

Thiamine or vitamin B1 plays a role in proper cell function. It's possibly effective at reducing the risk of cataracts. Food sources of thiamine include whole grains, meat and fish. In addition, supplements have also been proposed as a way to treat eye disease.

Niacin

Niacin may play a role in the prevention of glaucoma, a condition in which the optic nerve of our eye becomes damaged. Some food sources include beef, poultry, fish, mushrooms, peanuts, and legumes.

Riboflavin

As an antioxidant, riboflavin may protect against damaging free radicals in our eyes. Diets high in riboflavin have been associated with a reduced risk of developing cataracts. Research suggests that certain vitamins and nutrients may help prevent or slow the progression of several different eye conditions. Supplements may be beneficial if there are missing any of these vitamins in diet. However, eating a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein and healthy fats will provide with all the nutrients for maintaining healthy eyes.

Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed

◆ HOROSCOPE ◆

**ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)**

Avoid being overly opinionated. Make up for your transgressions. Love and romance are evident. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

**TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)**

Your reputation will be affected. Your suggestions at work will be well-received. You will overeat this week. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

**GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)**

Your partner will cause major issues this week. Talk about your intentions. Trips will be pleasurable. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

**CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)**

Be honest with yourself. Don't let personal problems interfere with work. You hard work will pay off. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

**LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)**

Try your hand at something creative. Don't let work upset you. Changes at home will be favourable. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

**VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)**

Read up on self-awareness. This will be a good week for a new relationship. Spend time with friends. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

**LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)**

Romantic relationships can suffer. Your contributions at work will receive recognition. Property deals will pay big dividends. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

**SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)**

Avoid confrontations. Pamper yourself this week. Don't reveal any personal details. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

**SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)**

Exercise should be on your routine. Confusion is apparent. Travel will bring about new romance. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

**CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)**

Be honest whenever possible. Visit friends you don't see that often. Put your energy into self-improvement programs. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

**AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)**

Rely on your wits to get your way. Older relatives will be difficult. You can make excellent purchases this week. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

**PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)**

Don't get involved in situations beyond your control. Don't reveal secrets. This week will be hectic at home. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.